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ABSTRACT

A realistic rationale for library involvement with media, media facilities, and services is needed in today's library if the function of the library as a disseminator of information is to be fulfilled. The concept of change in the role of the library must be accepted since there is a constant change in education. Although there is a definite need to support university programs with media materials, the library programs are developing slowly. A major concern of librarians is that the use of media in the library usually means that there must also be creation and production of media materials. The Bobst Library at New York University, designed in 1963 with neither a centralized audiovisual equipment service nor production facility, is an example of many conservative libraries today. In this case, the needs of the university community are overlooked or underdeveloped due to a lack of administration support. A bibliography containing over 60 citations is appended. (Author/DS)

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MEDIA SERVICES IN AN ACADEMIC LIBRARY

A Rationale with special implications

for New York University's Bobst Library.

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In light of recent events we have been made dramatically aware of the importance of preserving materials in nonprint format and the impact that this material can have on the world. I refer to the watergate hearings and the Nixon tapes. A question immediately comes to my mind. How many college and research libraries have the capacity, the interest or the desire to acquire for their patrons the tapes when and if released to the public. In addition, how many libraries had thought to preserve the hearings of the Ervin and House Judiciary committees on audio and/or video tape to provide researchers with material whose historical significance is monumental.

If we accept the ideas postulated by Media theorists and philosophers like Marshall McLuhan and Neil Postman on the end to the monopoly of the print medium as a means of communication we must look into the current practices of libraries and the manner in which material is presented by them and the current services offered by these libraries.

The generation of students now in school has been raised on a steady diet of television, radio, films, and other media forms as a means of communication to a greater extent than previous generations. The role media plays in today's instructional program is rapidly becoming more and more important.

In many cases the library has reacted negatively to newer media being included in the collection. One library director from New York University " crystallizes his position with the statement, if my University wants media in the library I am going to look for another job." [1]

In light of attitudes like this it is necessary to look at the function of the library, the rationale for library involvement with media, media involved, facilities and services needed. I would also like to explore the implications of these factors for New York University and the Bobst Library.

Functions of the Library

In its most general terms the functions of the library revolve around the preservation and distribution of recorded knowledge. Wilson and Tauber list eight items that " are fundamental to the successful operation of the library and the coordination of its program with the teaching and research program of the University."[2] These eight items are: 1) resources for instruction, research and extension, 2) competent library staff, 3) organization of materials for use, 4) adequate space and equipment, 5) integration of the library with administrative and educational policies, 6) integration of library with community, regional, national and international library resources, 7) adequate financial support, and 8) workable policy of library government."[3]

In all cases the library must reflect the objectives of the College or University which supports it. The Association of College and Research Libraries Committee on Standards in 1959 explained the functions of the College Library.

> The College library should be the most important intellectual resource of the academic community... Beyond supporting the instructional program to the fullest extent, the library should endeavor to meet the legitimate demands of all its patrons.[4]

Thus the library tries to bring together people and the information that they need to acquire.

Has the modern library fulfilled its role and performed its

function? The current information explosion has put a great strain on the library and its attempts to meet the needs of its patrons. This is especially true in its handling of materials not in book form. In fitting the library into today's educational patterns it is obvious that reliance on the book as the main source of knowledge is no longer acceptable. The libraries must accept their responsibilities and provide for media(or the"generic book" of Louis Shores). Enright provides libraries with four courses of action or roles in relation to new media materials. These possibilities range from doing nothing to the library becoming " actively involved in the amalgamation of book and non-book media. Here the library expects to become concerned in the provision of a full range of exploitation facilities and equipment, together with counseling services necessary for use of the materials." [5]

It is this last idea that I would like to now discuss.

Rationale for Library Involvement with Media

If we accept the function of the library as described previously and the fact that Education is constantly changing we must also accept the changing role of the library. In providing for student needs it is important to realize that students learn at different rates and from different mediums. The importance of book sources cannot be denied but it is the responsibility of the library to provide information based on its contents rather than its format. As William J. Quinly stated:

> The role of libraries in the last quarter of century is already beginning to trouble most administrators as they attempt to anticipate the demands of their patrons. It is becoming

> increasingly obvious that a major portion of man's informational resources will be in non-book format, and that the library will be expected to assume the role of a learning center with programmed material and electronic access to data banks of multi-media resources. 6

In a survey of 575 Colleges and Universities taken in 1952 by Fleming Bennett it was shown that 84% of the institutions had an AV service of some kind and that 15% (89) of the institutions reported a centralized AV service in the library. [7]

Many libraries " assumed this responsibility with the idea that students and faculty require information about various fields of interest and that such information must be supplied whether it be through the printed page, pictorial representation or sound." [8]

In addition to the traditional library functions of storing and circulating media materials some libraries are expanding their role to include the development and production of materials.

For the library the move into the area of media services has been slow and cautious. In much of the literature describing the reasons for library involvement the simpliest " answer is to make all media available through a single facility." [9] This one stop shopping concept makes best use of students and teachers time.

> Most of the writings favoring IMC's do so in terms of the users. Most of the arguments against the materials centers subordinate or completely ignore the only reason for their existence: to be of service to students and teachers. 10

Media Types and Services

Today's campuses are literally saturated with media and " media freaks". Looking at various college catalogues we can see Media Ecology Program, Communications, Visual Arts and underlying all programs a general awareness of media by students and teachers.

> Media have been used to increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of education. The book increased efficiency by making information available to more people economically, the chalkboard made classroom instruction more effective, and the training developments of the world war were certainly geared to efficiency. The current high interest in media continues to be directed chiefly towards increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching. 11

In dealing with media it is important to understand what is media. In New Spaces for Learning media is defined by use.

> If used simply to assist a professor in the teaching learning process by presenting supporting material, usually intermittently, they are referred to as instructional aids. If, on the other hand, the devices present a complete body of information, they are considered to be media. The chief distinction then, lies in the extent to which the device or system of devices carries the burden of instruction; a medium is largely self-supporting, while an aid serves to supplement the instructor's presentation. 12

Enright in quoting Donald Ely indicated that

> media have been defined as graphic, photographic, electronic or mechanized means of arresting, processing or reconstructing visual or verbal information or combinations of visual or verbal information or any form of device or equipment used to transmit information between persons. 13

Within the confines of these and other definitions the library must assume the function of serving the needs of its patrons and provide the media and/or aids necessary to support the university program.

Library use of media materials usually includes the traditional audiovisual formats such as: films, filmstrips, slides, videotapes, recordings, photographs, sound tapes, records, kits (combinations of various mediums) and models.

In a survey done by R.R. Bowker Company for Library Journal and School Library Journal advertisers in 1970(approx. no original date) 6300 questionairres were sent out to discover what types of Audio-Visual equipment was available. Of the 578 replies the information pertaining to College libraries showed that the following classes of AV equipment were available. [14]

Type	Percent of Libraries owning equipment
Records	86
Tapes	77
8mm Films	27
16 mm Films	41
Transparencies	55
Filmstrips	77

In recent years many libraries are advancing into systems including computer assisted instruction and dial access. College libraries must anticipate further developments in these areas for the future. I will not deal directly with them since computers alone could be dealt with in a paper of this type. I believe that dial access systems are now losing favor with most institutions with the arrival of the audio cassette and the drying up of federal funding under which many of the systems were set up.

Henry Quark has identified four functions necessary for the operation of the instructional materials center as a process system:

1. There must be a pool of basic and specialized instructional materials available for learner and teacher use.
2. Teacher and learner experiences must be supplied continuously, leading to improved selection, broad utilization, and extensive-intensive application of learning materials.
3. Supporting services, manned by sufficient competent personnel must be supplied for effective maintenance, distribution and application.
4. Local production of unique materials demanded for effective and efficient instruction must be carried on. [15]

I believe it is this last point concerning local production which causes most concern and skepticism among librarians. While traditional practice and examples exist for the handling, storage and distribution of materials the actual creation of media materials is a new responsibility for librarians to handle and understand. Yet no librarian will deny the importance of their role in helping students creat original ideas, essays, term papers or thesis reports,as long as they are in print format. Why then shouldn't the library and its librarians assist the student and teacher in assembling his ideas in a form which may not be put through a typewriter and must be projected or listened to.

It is this area of library service to the patron that must be explored.

What is local production? Local production is an important aspect of a media services program. The production may be limited to

> the making of charts and graphs, transparencies for the overhead and the like -- or it may be a more extensive operation, including the production of materials of all types - slides, motion pictures, models and apparatus, kinescopes, audio and video tapes.

Often television origination, recording, distribution and control will also be included in these functions. 16

The production center can act as a catalyst on campus and assist professors and students in the use of technology and the planning and design of programs for instructional purposes or to meet course requirements. In addition the center can provide an information clearinghouse on media and assistance in the design of instruction to meet contemporary needs. The need for locally produced materials was discussed by Moldstad and Frye. They felt that"locally produced materials have several advantages over those on the market. First of all, they're up to the minute... Another advantage is the flexibility they allow the instructor, and instructors.. can be encouraged to try out new teaching methods." [17] with proper support from the center and its staff. Local production offers the capability to produce materials which may not be available and this helps relieve the problem inherent in the lack of adequate software to be utilized in today's educational process.

In dealing with media and the media services we must accept the idea that moving into the future we may not be permitted to build libraries as they have been known in the past. Media and the technology of communication have put a tremendous burden on todays library and the librarians who must make them work. Change will be a constant factor which we will have to accept.

Before the turn of the present century, it is possible that the institutional library as we know it will no longer exist. It will have become a switching center on a vast information network and will be capable of providing a hard copy of computer printout of any document, of receiving and transmitting both audio and video signals...

Thus, as libraries evolve from repositories of printed materials into learning resource centers offering both book and non-book materials, many librarians will increasingly be responsible for learning and handling the intricacies of educational media. 18

Special Implications for New York University

At New York University we have just opened a building whose original design and philosophy dates back to 1963. In its original thinking the plans for the building were limited to those of the library staff at the time. As a result of the ideas expressed by the library planners and transferred to the architects the building has many flaws especially in its coping with modern automation and media. The present administration has tried to play a game of "catch up" to make the library function in the 1970's. The major problem has been the style needed to catch up quickly is not a conservative one. As in football the quarterback when behind must change his game plan and try to be innovative, daring and bold in his attempts to win. In the area of media and media services we have done none of these.

The history of Bobst library and its philosophy can best be summed up by the attitude of a NYU director of libraries as quoted in Grove and Totten.

> I personally feel that the library now is real 'skizo' in that we essentially have two groups. I represent the old group or more staid, or reactionary or whatever you call it, who recognize that the world is changing, that perhaps the printed word contrives to have tremendous significance. Then you've got another group who, it strikes me, are picking up the idea that for some reason or other the library has a right to be the center of everything. I don't see the that the library has got to be the hub of everything. I'm personally willing to run a library that serves a certain function and purpose. Why has everybody got to come to the library? It doesn't bother me at all when I know the statistics, as we all know, what is it, fifty percent of all graduates go through without ever using more than the reserves once. That eighty percent of your graduates go out without really using the library. That doesn't bother me! I haven't got to be the center of the universe.

> I want to promote for those twenty percent who are going to use bibliographic materials. I want to provide the best service, best possible organization and all that kind of thing and it doesn't bother me that people are landing on the moon and this is going to change the world, that we are doing things in medicine that are going to change things, that the multi-media is making it possible now for people to learn in depth without ever looking at a book. I don't care about this! I mean this doesn't bother me. Fine, let them learn that way. I'm all for it. But I don't feel that I have to be the guardian of their learning somehow or other.
>
> Warming to his task, the librarian crystallizes his position with the statement, ' If my university wants media in the library I am going to look for another job. 19

To furhter compound this attitude the University does not have a centralized AV equipment service but relies on each building to supply faculty needs or for departments to purchase equipment needed out of their own funds. Adding to the problem is the fact that no local production facility exists on a campus wide basis to assist professors or students in creation of media materials.

The record at NYU like other institutions is a " record of waste, frustration and duplication of effort involved in attempting new approaches in the application of new media techniques... Such efforts are often tied with a particular temporary funding pattern (such as a grant), consume great quantities of the energies and emotional drive of one or a few dedicated individuals, and usually spring up in an academic department or in a supporting area, neither of which encourages broadening and reinforcing successful applications elsewhere. Alternatively many scattered and uncoordinated media efforts may receive limited support from hidden sums tucked away in departmental operating budgets for equipment and supplies, and staffed by overburdened faculty or part time assistants. " 20

What is needed is a real commitment in the areas of media services by the library administration backed by allocation of funds for the support of the program. The typical excuses of lack of funds from the current budget and the need to obtain additional faculty support for media use ignores the need for the library to pioneer in this area and support the educational program of the University. The Bobst Library was designed to be a central force in providing a " renaissance" for NYU. The library has the space, the need and the nucleus of a staff capable of operating a media services program. The slowness with which the library has moved into the role of pioneer has roots in the attitude prevelant in some areas of the administration and the reluctance to commit. the library to a program which might be costly and which could be handled by another agency (even though no such agency exists). This goes against the rationale presented earlier for library involvement with media and the types of services that should be provided.

The needs of the University community are being overlooked and a needed service has not been developed.

It is unfortunate that " at the present time, the most promising organizational developments for using learning resources are taking place outside the library in large research Universities."[21]

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